



Viewing Past Performance and Future Needs When Voting

Posted by [Pierluigi Oliverio](#) on Monday, March 24, 2008

The council meeting last Tuesday evening lasted until almost midnight. The council discussed and voted on the Mayor's Budget Message, San Jose Medical Center and Mexican Heritage Plaza. I was happy to see the budget discussed at night so more people were able to attend.

San Jose Medical Center (HCA) has been closed for several years and sits on 10 acres in downtown San Jose. HCA, a nationwide hospital provider, would like to knock down the buildings and sell the land (which they own) for development. (Incidentally, this was the hospital where I was born and it has served many of our residents). San Jose is not in the hospital business, however; we are in the zoning business. I voted yes to maintain the land for healthcare uses. Land is precious and becoming increasingly rare. Once land is built on, it's gone forever. As more living units are built downtown, the need for a medical facility will only increase. In addition, public transportation in our downtown enables more people to access healthcare at this site than other places in San Jose.

Mexican Heritage Plaza and the Mexican Heritage Corporation (MHC) have been questionable for years. Their stability and revenue issues have been deteriorating, making the city their main financial provider because private donations have not backed this non-profit. I have attended several theater events at the Plaza and one of the community meetings regarding the future of the Plaza. Many community members and numerous city staff attended the community meeting also.

Although the intentions of the Plaza and MHC are noble, good deeds do not pay rent. With the city spending millions on various non-profits every fiscal year, I think that San Jose needs to make sure that these non-profits are able to sustain themselves. It is clear to me that the MHC and Mexican Heritage Corp. have many issues. Therefore, I voted no on the proposal put forward that night.

My preference would be to just start over, let MHC go bankrupt, and the city takes over maintenance of the taxpayer-funded Plaza in the interim. I don't want to sound too simplistic, but I think the possibility of contracting an individual to organize and oversee the Mariachi Festival, and another to run some limited arts programming at the Plaza, would meet the overall needs until a new organization could emerge to fulfill the mission of the Plaza. I hope they can make it work, but it will take more city funding and a lot of city staff time either way. I am not sure it is fair to other non-profits who offer good services to the community and maintain their books

Also, on last week's blog I was asked how much accrued sick pay the City of San Jose pays out each year to employees. Here is what I found out:

Yearly Totals

2007 \$5,521,043.53

2006 \$4,608,181.67

2005 \$6,900,550.27

Breakdown

2007

\$2,284,709.02 Non-Sworn

\$2,703,006.37 Police

\$533,328.14 Fire

2006

\$1,769,950.33 Non-Sworn

\$2,290,894.69 Police

\$547,336.65 Fire

2005

\$2,880,819.10 Non-Sworn

\$2,966,035.61 Police

\$1,053,695.56 Fire

Sick time should be used for illness and not a large payout at the end of a career. Based on the rolling average above, this money could be have been used to hire additional police officers or other needed personnel to pave roads.

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